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Prison Action News
PO Box 832
Watertown, MA 02472

Prison Action News is a newsletter collaboratively published by prisoner support groups for prisoners worldwide to report on their struggles and acts of resistance from behind bars. All submissions must be **RECEIVED** by **January 1st or July 1st** and be in compliance with the guidelines below. Please note that we retain the right as editors to alter submissions for grammatical and content-related issues. Prison Action News is one part of the multi-faceted Prison Abolition movement. We believe that the writing in Prison Action News is as important as poetry or political essays, but is often less represented.

History:

The idea for Prison Action News came out of the 2007 Anarchist Black Cross (ABC) Network gathering. We wanted to create a venue for prisoners to share updates of their activities, similar to the updates we wrote in the network newsletter. As people on the outside, we can facilitate this dialog of prison resistance, and help our comrades stay informed about the inspiring actions others are taking. We accept submissions from prisoners and prison groups worldwide, and bilingual writing. With your help this newsletter will be a success- if you know of resistance taking place that is not represented here, please send us a submission, and spread the word!

Please send ALL SUBMISSIONS, SUBSCRIPTION REQUESTS and ADDRESS CHANGES to:

Prison Action News PO Box 832 Watertown, MA 02472
prisonactionnews@riseup.net

Guidelines

1. A submission must not exceed 500 words.
2. We will not accept submissions with racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise oppressive language.
3. An update may be a report on resistance activities of individual prisoners or prison groups (this can include, but is not limited to, radical book groups, hunger strike, general strike, letter writing campaigns, etc.).
4. A report should not be a political essay or a report on prison conditions, rather, the response and resistance to these conditions.
5. PAN accepts entries of artwork and illustrations.
6. One submission per group, per prison, per newsletter.
7. We will not report on gang activity.
8. We accept bilingual entries (when one language is English), as well as Spanish entries!
9. Entries may be submitted for publication by prison groups and organizations, or individuals, and may be submitted for publication with the name and contact information of the writer, or anonymously, to protect their identity.

PLEASE MAIL US YOUR ART FOR FUTURE ISSUES!!!

"All is for all! If the man and the woman bear their fair share of work, they have a right to their fair share of all that is produced by all, and that share is enough to secure them well-being. No more of such vague formulas as "The Right to work," or "To each the whole result of his labour." What we proclaim is "The Right to Well-Being: Well-Being for All!" Peter Kropotkin - The Conquest of Bread (1907)

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Disclaimer:

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NEW PRISON GROUPS AND PROGRAMS

Toon Tribe

February 2014

I'm 22 years of age. I've been down in the belly of the beast for 4 1/2 years now. As a young man being treated like dogshit, I've come to treasure the men and women that stand before me, behind me, and beside me. Unity is our greatest tool. Solidarity is the wrench we throw in the gears of this evil oppressor. I have a lot to complain about, like being in Alaska in a cement igloo and I can see my breath. But today I'm thankful because I read (for the first time) the PAN newsletter and the beautiful people in that letter have expressed my deepest beliefs: unity and a love for a better life. PAN was given to me by a guy in the hole. I hated that S.O.B. He was that angry old man that hollers to the heavens if you say the wrong thing (purposely), which I did cause I'm still a "punk kid." During one of our raging screaming matches, I stopped, and started being extra respectful on a whim, because my role model told me "we as a group" should try (P.O.A.) Politeness, Openness, and Autocracy. So I've been destroying my remaining enemy completely and making friends along the way, and through it all we've started an activists' group: Toon Tribe. We are not considered a threat group or gang. We are pushing for a better way of life and we strive to change our stars. PAN is very provocative and the things I read today are encouraging. To the people standing together like us, I salute and support you all. We're from a different walk of life, but we are men and women, we are human, and we are not alone! Stand tall together!

With love and respect,

Koby Blake – Toon Tribe
#529622
Lemon Creek
Correctional Center
2000 Lemon Creek Rd.
Juneau, AK 99801



PRISON GROUPS UPDATES

F.T.S.: Something is Happening in Texas!

May 2014

Revolutionary Greetings, Comrades! Something is happening in Texas! A fresh election, a pivotal grievance petition, and a God-given wakeup call, are just three to name. F.T.S. has been on the grind! Our members have successfully assisted in lawsuits against the state, grievances that have successfully appealed vital cases that are bogus, and we are now pulling the very foundations themselves. Assisting in our effort by getting your family to vote for Wendy Davis is crucial! Ask your aunt, uncle, brother, mother, whomever. Greg Abbott has pledged to do away with the Texas parole system and adopt a system similar to Florida's, which believes in inmates doing all of their time. Being aware is truly being alive! On November 4th, 2013, there was a riot here on the RB Unit. Most of the people in the section and on the wing went down in it, including innocent bystanders, but there were some who survived. As soon as the cases were served, people automatically gave up! No faith in the system! Step 1/Step 2? Forget about it...but, strangely, people were ready to try anything and put their best foot forward to try and appeal their cases.

Due to the efforts of the "Texas Grievance Petition," a stronger foundation has been laid for all of us inmates. Huntsville's Administration has been under constant pressure to enforce its guidelines thanks to our allied efforts. Right now in May 2014, most of the cases concerning that riot have been appealed and over-turned! The cameras that supposedly caught everyone fighting didn't even work! The ones that did work only could make out a few people, from what I hear. It's amazing how the system tries to rail-road people, eh? I helped write many grievances during this time, it's not magic, it's application. M.I.M. Prisons* tells of our many struggles and victories in the war for our common goal, which is to DERAILED THE SYSTEM! They also provide litigation that will aid and assist you in your present struggles. The struggle is real! The tide is changing quickly, and our comrades far and wide are uniting!

Every individual is needed because individuality cannot be replaced. F.T.S. and our comrades need what you bring to the table. Our progress and victories are mounting civilians...become one of the few and yet, one of the mighty generation! Join the struggle! Dedication. Determination. Discipline. F.T.S.!!!

In the struggle,

-Ark

*Write: MIM Distributors, PO Box 40799, San Francisco, CA 94140 and request a copy of the "Texa\$ Grievance Guide" and "Appealing the \$100 medical co-pay in Texa\$." These guides are free and written by "Rue" who is a member of the National Lawyers Guild and currently sits on the steering committee for the NLG "Mass Incarceration Committee."

Pelican Bay Short Corridor Human Rights Movement February 2014

We are prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison who have all lived for over 15 years locked 23 hours a day in small windowless cells, without ever being able to hug or touch our families, without ever seeing birds, trees, or the outside world, with no programs or chance for parole. California keeps us in these torturous conditions not because of any violence we have committed, but because it believes we are affiliated with a gang, often based on artwork or photos we possess, tattoos we have, literature we read, who we talk to, or anonymous informants' statements that we have no way of challenging. We are put in Pelican Bay not for any specific term of months or years for misconduct we have committed, but indefinitely, which in practice means forever- unless we become informants.

Last summer we went on hunger strike - we were willing to starve ourselves to death rather than continue to endure these dehumanizing conditions forever. We ended the strike because several compassionate legislators promised to call the hearings that are taking place today. Yet today the legislators will hear from psychologists, lawyers, other experts, corrections officials - but not from us who have the most experience with the conditions we face - because California (CDCR) prison officials refuse to let us testify, even remotely via video or audio which they could easily do.

So this is our banned testimony: CDCR claims to have now instituted a reform program. It is a sham, just like the so called reform they instituted a decade ago after a court settlement which resulted in no real change. This new reform effort still maintains the basic conditions at Pelican Bay, and will continue to keep prisoners in isolation for vague gang affiliation based on artwork, literature, communications, or informants' testimony that does not meet California's judicial standards for reliability in criminal trials. California is still unwilling to move to a real behavior based system where prisoners are given determinate terms in solitary after due process hearings at which they are found guilty of some serious misconduct such as assault, murder, rape or drug dealing. Instead, these new policies widen the net of prisoners who can be labeled as gang affiliates and isolated based on that label. These unjust and ineffective policies are very expensive and have already cost our state millions of tax dollars which could be put to better use.

Moreover, even those prisoners who need to be isolated from the general population because of the violence they have committed while in prison ought to be treated humanely. There is no reason California can't run very high security prisons that allow prisoners held in segregation to have contact visits with family, phone calls to family and friends, educational and rehabilitation programs, more out of cell time, cells with windows, recreational yards that allow for small groups to recreate together and see the outside world: in short, segregation from the general population, but not torture

or dehumanization.

We have written petitions and letters to the Governor, filed a class action Federal lawsuit, and gone on hunger strikes seeking real reform, not the bogus reform Californian officials now propose. It's time for California to do the right thing. It's time for the legislature to enact meaningful reforms.

Todd Ashker, C58191, D4-121

Arturo Castellanos, C17275, D1-121

Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa (Dewberry), C35671, D1-117

Antonio Guillen, P81948, D2-106

4 Reps: for the Pelican Bay Short Corridor Human Rights Movement, Crescent City, California

United Panther Movement, Red Fist Alliance June 2014

This is a follow up to my piece on the United Panther Movement, Red Fist Alliance. This piece is on literature, specifically what literature I have available. I have literature available on individual/group underground community-based self defense/survival projects; struggle, with the objective being better coordination of the second front, of the prisoner justice struggle, this in response to the ongoing murder campaign the department of corrections has against peaceful prisoner protests. This is my blog: <http://betweenthebars.org/blogs/1491>. I'm allowed prisoner to prisoner correspondence.

Robert Thrower #44717

Centennial Correctional Facility

PO Box 777

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Canon City, CO 81215

THE ALMIGHTY PEN AND PAPER: GRIEVANCES AND LEGAL WORK

Abuse/Mistreatment Regarding Handicapped Prisoner Wayne Balance #177429 April 2014

Mr. Wayne Balance is a Vietnam veteran who honorably served his country and was never properly diagnosed for exposure to Agent Orange, PTSD, and/or TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) and likely should have been properly medically treated by the United States government rather than sent to prison, warehoused, mistreated, and flat-out abused by prisoners and staff alike.

Medical researchers have discovered that even minor TBI's, previously believed to be inconsequential, can result in lasting disabilities. They also discovered that the injuries caused by TBI's are cumulative, in that a series of minor TBI's can lead to major impairment. The DCD even recognizes TBI in prisons and jails as "an important public health problem" and notes that TBI may result in memory problems and inability to follow directions, irritability, or anger that is difficult to control, slowed verbal and physical responses, and impulsive behavior- all of which can cause problems in a correctional setting.

On April 4, 2014 at approximately 10:25am, Mr. Balance was observed being pushed back to his assigned prison housing unit. He was wet from drizzle, cold, shaking out of control, and crying! He had just come from trying to get his pain medication again for the third time that morning! Right at 10:00am Mr. Balance was able to solicit someone to push him to the medical unit to pick up his medications. Upon arrival to the medical unit, all prisoners were ordered to clear the immediate area due to an administrative segregation prisoner being escorted to the medical unit. When Correctional Officer Miller initially ordered the prisoners to move and locked the gate, everyone stayed in that area and waited. When the gate was reopened, Officer Miller immediately locked the gate again and everyone was told to vacate the area completely, until further notice.

Only until this second time the gate was locked did Mr. Balance instruct the person that was pushing him to proceed to his assigned prison cell so that he could use the toilet. After using the toilet, he was told that he could not leave the housing until 10:20! At 10:20 he attempted to return to the medical unit to pick up his pain medication and was again told to return back to his assigned housing unit. At that point, Mr. Balance entered the housing unit and got the attention of Correctional Officer Weist and explained to him that he had been trying to get his pain medication all

morning and asked for assistance in getting there before 11:00am. Officer Weist told Mr. Balance that he would receive a conduct violation for not making it to medical on time (10:00).

After lunch he proceeded to finally pick up his pain medication. He was then told by Nurse Tiffany Breeden to not leave yet. Correctional Officer Jason Sullivan told Mr. Balance to return at 1:20pm to receive a misconduct violation. At 1:20pm I pushed Mr. Balance to the medical unit and along the way stopped Correctional Officer Miller to explain the situation. Officer Miller actually did the right thing by escorting Mr. Balance to the medical unit and informing Officer Sullivan that Mr. Balance did attempt to honor his medical pass and, due to no fault of his own, was not allowed. Officer Sullivan decided to disregard Officer Miller.

This pattern of false misconduct violations and retaliatory abuse is an ongoing documented sequence of events and I cannot continue to go along in order to get along. I understand that I am likely to be retaliated against for taking this stand in an attempt to utilize every single resource available to me, to take a stand for those who literally cannot stand for themselves.

Mr. Balance, and others that are wheelchair bound, is in a compromising situation with the rest of the prison population, because all wheelchair pushers are volunteers and volunteers have their own personal ulterior motives for volunteering their assistance. The handicapped prisoners in the Missouri Department of Correction and Human Resources are at the mercy of other prisoners who, more often than not, flat out extort, abuse, exploit and even molest handicapped prisoners for compensation.

In order to avoid being constantly abused, Mr. Balance has repeatedly filed a "Request for Reasonable Accommodations" form, requesting to be transferred to the geriatric unit, located within the Jefferson City Correctional Center, and has been systematically denied "Reasonable Accommodations" where the Missouri Department of Corrections does pay prisoners to push and/or aid and assist prisoners who are in dire need of help due to their disability.

I am asking you to support this cause by contacting Governor Jay Nixon and MDOC Director George Lombardi. Encourage other groups and individuals to get involved and stay involved until we get the job done.

Thank you for your time in this matter.

James Shelby #41244
4B-125
South Central Correctional Center
255 W. Highway 32
Licking, MO 65542

Bridgeton, NJ

March 2014

About four months ago, I had a 1:00pm appointment to see the State Eye Doctor. He kept touching my right shoulder, expressing in his own words that he “liked Inmate Hann” in a prospective manner. Then the doctor also questioned Inmate Hann “on who I could trust?!,” called Inmate Hann weird and insinuated that I was a liar!!

I tried to get the proof of inmate Hann’s eye examination. But it seemed like that was not the case! I immediately wrote about the incident on a remedy form. Still, to this day, I have not received an answer on what precautions were taken.

So I wrote two letters explaining this situation to the State Ombudsman and Attorney General Assistant Cindy Ford. Both agencies responded that my letter needed to be addressed to the Special Investigation Division, and I still received no answer.

I recently sent another letter to the Administrative Offices of Trenton, New Jersey. I still have no response yet. I also wrote a brief letter to to Cumberland County case management offices, requesting an M-1 Warrant so I could press street charges against the State eye doctor for sexual harassment.

Thank you for your assistance and help.

Sincerely yours,

Darrell Hann #592792
Southwoods State Prison
215 S. Burlington Road
Bridgeton, NJ 08302

Florence, CO

December 2013

Greetings comrades!
I am sending you this report on my present situation with the mail room staff here at USP Florence who have taken it upon themselves to violate my 1st Amendment rights by refusing me PAN issue 6.2. I am in the second stage of filing an Administrative Remedy. I intend to file a Civil Action suit on this matter as well as others besides this one. Any help in this would be greatly appreciated. I do plan to go all the way with this with no intentions of settlement out of court. I wrote to the ACLU and never received a response from them. This is my first time taking such a

stance. I wrote to the court here in Colorado and received the proper paperwork to file a civil suit and now need legal representation to help me file correctly.

Yours in struggle for liberation and justice.

In solidarity,

DRAMA King
Jeremy Valerio #40648-050
USP Florence-High (SMU)
PO Box 7000
Florence, CO 81226



Petersburg, VA

May 2014

This is Michael Silvera, my nom de guerre is Comrade Marid AKA Mikhail AKA phr33booter AKA Infomerc. This is a public announcement noting various productions I and my comrades are working on.

First of all, I am slowly introducing my own personal works. Please be patient. Being in prison I face many problems, such as lack of computer/internet, censorship, and lack of funds. Check with Comrade Rayson at South Chicago ABC for updates.

I am a left libertarian agorist, satanist, technologist insurgent and polyamorous bisexual sybarite, among other things. I am about halfway done with a lengthy sentence for threatening Bush Jr. and KKKlinton with anthrax and million dollar level credit card scams. I am of Sephardic-Russian-Jewish-Iberian-Judeo-Moorish Native Canadian lineage and I’m proudly an ENFP Aspie. I will be promoting the following philosophies. This list is not exhaustive:

Technologist Insurgent: A libertarian/anarchist doctrine that is pro-tech, noting technology is merely a tool, and can be used for liberation (e.g. cryptocurrencies, open source movement) as well as significantly increasing living standard of everyone. Technologist Insurgence also educates against pseudoscience from the state(e.g. religion, racism)/Right Wing as well as technophobia and pseudoscience in the radical and moderate left (e.g. “The Beautiful People” myth and anti-nuclear movement). Also advocates Anarcho-Transhumanism and Technogaianism Hedonistic Praxis: Doctrine that the highest achievements are pleasure and knowledge.

Red Agorism: Synthesis of anti-authoritarian social anarchism (non statist libertarian socialism) and market anarchism.

Suicidalism: An anarchist/libertarian philosophy that self-termination is a basic right held by all sentients (self-aware, intelligent Terron/Exo biological/organics, mechanicals/electronics/positronics, any resultant hybrid(s)). All self-termination requests should be fulfilled with assistance and supervision from accredited medical professionals.

Psychedelic Satanism: A lifestyle/cultural meme in which the rebel/oppositional archetypes are idealized, identified with and utilized as symbolic representative of associated values/attributes with an Egoist Individualist framework of gothic pantheism.

My work can now be found in “The Libertarian Connection.” I will start publishing in #347. Contact Erwin S. Strauss, 10 Hill St #22-L, Newark NJ, 07102 for back-issue pricing. Please mention I referred you. I’d also recommend activist-anarchists reading this to submit your own works for publication as it remains one of the few remaining print-edition forums for exchange and exposure to debate on controversial topics. I’d like to see some New Afrikan authors/philosophers as well as hackers and sexual dissidents expose their warcraft.

I am also working on Dark Desyre Zine, a zine for GBTLQ Satanists, Luciferians. Also, I am a founder of Lucifer: Liberi, an organization for Left Hand path adherents who are also anarchist/left libertarian.

Please contact me at:

Michael Jacob Silvera 22538-057
Federal Correctional Complex
PO Box 1000
Petersburg, VA 23804

On battles for health against Wexford Health Sources and the PA DOC April 2014

This concerns efforts to assist a developmentally delayed/disabled prisoner being refused health care, as his health fails. “Requests to staff” were sent to every staffer who is supposed to oversee health care. Most were never answered.

Complaints were filed with the Office of Professional Compliance on doctors and nurses, who had denied needed health care. Civil Rights complaints were filed with the Dept. of Justice, one on a doctor, the other on Wexford Health Sources and their parent company, The Bantry Group. The Prison Law Office at San Quentin shared

Wexford’s documented misdeeds from 2003 to the present, covering eleven states, which prove Wexford’s actions are corporate culture.

Formal grievances were filed at each incident of misdeeds by Wexford controlled medical staff, these incidents included total denial of access to health care for five days in a row, on multiple occasions, denial of Epilepsy medications for five or more days in a row on several occasions, and deliberate indifference and refusal of treatment after emergency transport by guards to the prison hospital, among other serious misdeeds.

Grievances exposed that the DOC has chosen to protect Wexford, rather than protect prisoners from Wexford’s misdeeds. At every level of appeal, this tacit complicity became more evident, as documentation and proofs were more deliberately ignored. Grievances about grievances had to be filed, to force the Warden to respond to previous grievances, as he deliberately attempted to derail Due Process rights. If nothing else, these failed attempts at justice via the Grievance process will make excellent Court exhibits.

Again, “Requests to Staff” forms were then sent to the Secretary of Corrections, his Deputy Secretary, the DOC’s BHCS, Office of Professional Responsibility, Graterford’s Warden, his Deputy Superintendent, the CHCA, and two Medical Directors, outlining these ongoing problems with Wexford. Most of these remain ignored.

I contacted the PA Institutional Law Project, the PA Prison Society, and Disability Rights Network, being careful to explain that the person in need was severely developmentally delayed/disabled, with his limitations clearly spelled out, as well as the serious problems with Wexford. The PILP still refused to help, the PA Prison Society, after several letters, has still not bothered to respond to pleas for help. We had the same non-response to letters sent to the American Friends Service Committee. The Disability Rights Network referred us to the PILP...

Articles on health issues were submitted to Graterfriends, an organ of the PA Prison Society. To better suit the DOC, heavy editing removes negative comments about DOC staffers or the PILP, suggestions to sue Wexford employees or DOC staff are excised. With massive documentation for exhibits, our thrust now is to find legal representation for this prisoner, as the DOC as well as Wexford will do anything to stop public exposure of their actions, both also greatly fear money damages almost as much.

Anyone out there with questions, advice, or help of any kind, please feel free to contact me.

In Respect and Solidarity,

Vernon Maulsby #AY-4429
Graterford Prison
Box 244
Graterford, PA 19426

Rethinking Illinois' Truth-In-Sentencing Law

May 2014

We are all aware of the dire fiscal state in which Illinois finds itself. One of the main causes of this has been years of passing laws without any consideration of the financial costs of their enactment. One of the most egregious examples of this is Truth-In-Sentencing (TIS) law. Truth-In-Sentencing in Illinois requires that nearly all violent offenders serve 85% to 100% of their sentences. Prior to TIS being enacted here in 1998, offenders served, on average, 44% of their sentences. Although TIS was enacted over a decade and a half ago, not a single cost/benefit analysis has been undertaken to determine what monetary effect enactment has had on the state.

Other states that enacted TIS legislation adjusted for it by reducing sentences so the average imposed sentence was about half of what it was before enactment. That way a prisoner ended up serving the same amount of time in prison and it didn't cost the state additional money. Illinois, on the other hand, failed to adjust.

A couple of years ago I compiled a preliminary report (available at www.realcostof-prisons.org) using rudimentary calculations and the limited statistics available from the Illinois Department of Corrections. I found that the additional costs incurred by the State for sentences imposed under TIS for 2002-2004 alone will be over \$750 million. My estimates were extremely conservative, reached using a \$25,000 per year per person cost of incarceration figure, which is nearly \$10,000 too low. The number also failed to account for the increased expense required to care for prisoners when they become elderly and require medical care.

Prior to TIS passage in Illinois, if a person received a 50-year sentence for murder at age 18, he or she would have had to serve, on average, 44% of that sentence, or 22 years. Thus, they would have been released at age 40, and it would have cost the State \$841,896 to carry out that sentence. After passage of TIS, that same sentence means that the offender must now serve the entire 50 years and won't be released until they are 68. Therefore, the first 32 years will cost the State \$1,224,576, and the last 18 years, when he or she is elderly, will cost the State an additional \$1,242,000. Thus, TIS nearly tripled the cost to taxpayers, adding \$1,624,680 to the tab for this one sentence. Each year over 300 people in Illinois are sentenced for murder. Thousands more are sentenced for other violent crimes.

All of these TIS sentences add up to the state incurring well over a quarter of a billion dollars per year in added liabilities. Every year that TIS remains law without action to adjust, reform it, or repeal it, we add another quarter billion dollars to the state's credit card that we'll all be paying for years to come.

Isn't it time we had a discussion about what constitutes a considerable amount of money to spend to punish someone? Studies have shown that inmates who have served 25 years in prison and are 50 or older have less than a 1% recidivism rate. Keeping elderly people incarcerated well past the point where they cease to pose a threat to society may sate our appetite for revenge, but it does nothing to keep society safe. It actually does the opposite by taking away funds that could have been used to employ police officers and teachers, fix dangerous bridges and roads, and rehabilitate the 90% of prisoners who will return to the streets. It is time to use some "common cents" in our criminal justice policies.

Joseph Dole K84446
Stateville Correctional Center
PO Box 112
Joliet, IL 60434

Charleston, MO

March 2014

My family and friends have power and money and are working with my enemies to silence me, sabotage me, and stonewall me. I was told that they are paying off people and organizations not to help me. They are starting to find out that not everyone can be paid off. The organizations that are being paid off now have more money to help others, so that's a good thing.

I am receiving a lot of positive responses to the letters I send. I also receive a lot of information from government agencies, religious organizations, and non-profit organizations. I use that information to teach prisoners.

I am working on a project with H.R.D.C. Contact them at: Lance T. Weber, Attorney at Law, Litigation Project Director, Human Rights Defense Center; PO Box 1151, Lake Worth, FL 33460; 561-360-2532, Fax: 866-735-7176, email: Lweber@human-rightsdefensecenter.org. They have a monthly magazine that reviews and analyzes prisoner rights rulings, and news about prison issues. For subscription info contact them at the address above.

Kim Cordingly, Ph.D- Lead Consultant/Self-Employment Network, West Virginia University, 800-526-7234, is now helping me start my non-profit organization. They know of a lot of resources to help people with disabilities like myself with work-place accommodations, and assistance with self-employment, non-profit and small business development options. Now I only send letters, but in time I want to start programs, publish books.

I am now using the ACLU National Prison Project Directory 2008 Edition – Publications section, as a mailing list. In the past I used Partnership for Safety and Justice-Prisoner Support Directory, National HIRE Network Resource List, National Legal Aid and Defender Association Resource List and the resource list from Just Detention International. Prisoners can contact them at: Cynthia Totten, Attorney at Law, Just Detention International, 3325 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 340, Los Angeles, CA 90010; www.justdetention.org; 213-384-1400; Fax 213-384-1411.

I work 12-14 hours a day, six days a week. In time I will receive grants and donations from the public to continue my work. I encourage all you readers to stay strong and never stop what you are doing to help yourselves, and others. We will change the system in time. I tell everyone that unity is the key. Without unity little or nothing will change!!!

Never again!!!

Robert S. Taback 506777
Southeast Correctional Ctr. 5C-117
300 East Pedro Simmons Dr.
Charleston, MO 63834

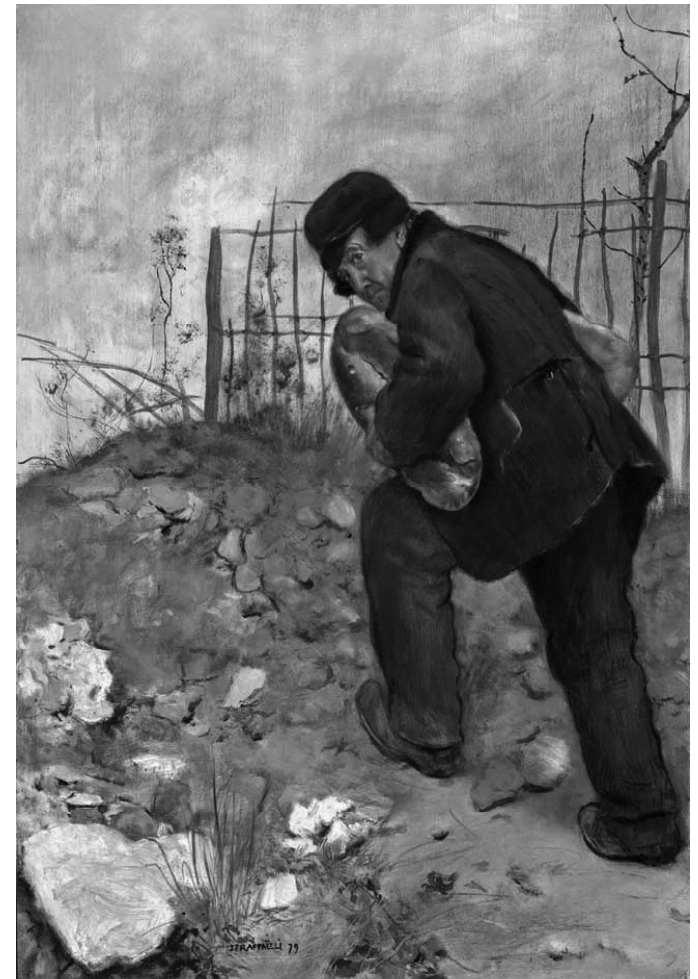
Texas Courts Allowing TDCJ Officials to be “Above” the Law February 2014

On 3-24-13 I was physically assaulted by Sgt. Ryan T. Slaypack while I was at my job assignment. I submitted a step 1 grievance which was immediately “stolen” by Sgt’s Parker and Burleson who called me out and threatened to lock me up, etc., basically trying to scare me into keeping quiet about the assault. The grievance was then returned to grievance office and turned over to Unit O.I.G. who made an investigation of the matter including interviewing the two inmate witnesses to the assault and myself passing a polygraph which Slaypack and all witnessing officers refused to take. Also several other offenders had been assaulted by Slaypack and tried to report it to Captains and Lts. and were told to go away. O.I.G. apparently collected enough evidence to turn my case over to Special Prosecutor Alice Gregg for prosecution and Slaypack was terminated from T.D.C.J. employment. For reasons still unknown to me Alice Gregg rejected the case against Slaypack. To date Alice Gregg has never contacted me in any form, so to be honest, I don’t even know if O.I.G. actually turned it over or not, possibly blowing smoke up my tailpipe just to pacify me. Slaypack then went through a mediation program and resumed his job. He even came back as a ranking officer (Sgt) instead of having to start from

scratch. I then filed a class action civil suit in Jones Co. District Court in September 2013, case #023110. To date it still has not been served. I had an outside source call the district clerk to inquire why it has not been served and the response was that “I” had not asked for service. That is a bold lie! After the name of each defendant in the suit, “SERVICE REQUESTED” is typed in bold all capital letters. Judge Brooks Haggler has an open hatred for all prisoners and goes out of his way to cover for T.D.C.J. Staff guilty of crimes. I am still pursuing the lawsuit. I am currently fixing to submit a writ of Mandamus, attempting to push the suit. As the famous words of Winston Churchill state, “If you want to see the scum of society, go to your local prison at shift change.”

Respectfully submitted,

John McCollor #1452312
Robertson Unit
12071 FM 3522
Abilene, TX 79601



DIRECT ACTION/NON-COMPLIANCE

Kenedy, TX

May 2014

Greetings Comrades in the struggle to end the injustices in the prison system. It is time for us to rise above the sky and take back control of this prison system. Let's face it- prisons need us to run them; we have to cook the food, we have to clean the dorms/wings, and we have to help with commissary. If everybody started laying down and refusing to work, this will stop the prison system from making money, and there would be some changes in the system.

I write grievance complaints about this messed up administration. Right now I have a civil rights complaint that is being investigated by the US Department of Justice. I am on a hunger strike right now until these bogus and fabricated disciplinary cases are dismissed from my record. I have been hunger striking for 12 days now. I will get justice. The prison guards have been provoking me to violence and if they keep on then I'm going to give them what they are looking for. If there is no justice in the system then the guards and administration won't have any peace.

To all my fellow inmates: don't let the administration and these prison guards have no peace. Give them a hard time all the time and make their jobs difficult every day.

In solidarity and struggle,

Anthony Washington #1458201
Connally Unit
899 FM 632
Kenedy TX 78119



Dining Hall Protest: Prisoners Challenge Food Cutbacks at SCI Coal Township June 2014

Approximately 500 prisoners at SCI Coal Township refused to go to the dining hall for seven consecutive days between Monday, June 16 and Sunday, June 22 in protest of cutbacks to food portions at the prison. In a remarkable display of discipline, unity, sacrifice, and solidarity, the men maintained the boycott for a full week, sharing food items they had in their cells with one another.

Support from family members and human rights defenders on the outside was loud and widespread as well. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and SCI Coal Township received so many calls on the first day of the protest that they were compelled to post a message on their website claiming that prisoners were being fed according to undefined "standards." The pressure kept on throughout the week, forcing prison officials to spend hours on the phone listening to outraged family members and others take them to task for making people go hungry in order to save money.

This protest was the largest collective action by prisoners in the PADOC in recent memory and has the potential to inspire and elevate human rights and abolitionist organizing to a new level of commitment, power, and possibility.

Background and demands:

On May 26, prisoners were told that the cutbacks were related to budget concerns and that their morning meal portions would be severely reduced. Prisoners are now served half a cup of cream of wheat or oatmeal, two pieces of toast and two sugar packets at the minimum three times per week. Rations such as syrup have been cut in half.

The budget cuts have not, however, had any effect on staff dining options. The administration has not made any cutbacks in portions provided to the Staff Dining Room, where staff have multiple menu selections and food options, salad bars, and multiple dessert entries that drain from the prison food budget.

Prisoners requested that:

1. The food portions and sugar rations be returned to levels prior to the May 26 memo from Superintendent Mooney authorizing cutbacks to food portions and rations.
2. The Staff Dining Room's unjustified and expansive entitlements be eliminated and staff be required to eat from the same Department of Corrections Master Menu, receiving the same menu as prisoners with the same portions and rations. No multiple menus, optional desserts, salad bars or other entitlements. Eliminating staff entitlements would save sufficient money from the DOC's food budget and not require cutbacks to prisoners' food.
3. If the DOC continues to authorize cutbacks to prisoners' nutritional needs then prisoners request that the DOC authorize policy and procedures allowing prisoners to receive monthly 60-pound food packages from family and friends as prisoners in New Jersey, New York, and Ohio are allowed to receive. If the DOC places the budget over our nutritional needs we request a means to provide for our own nutritional needs.

Food is a human right and the government must provide prisoners with adequate amounts of nutritional food to maintain physical and mental health. At a time when Governor Corbett and the DOC are seeking a record amount of money to warehouse people in prisons – more than \$2 billion – there is no justification for forcing people to go hungry.

Greek prisons: Prisoners in struggle announce mass hunger strike

June 2014

From June 18th, 2014, prisoners in all Greek prisons have abstained from prison meals as a way of protesting against the fascist bill for type C prisons, and in defense of the right to furlough and release on parole.

However the minister of Justice and the government insist on ignoring our protest. They have not responded in any way to our just demands, and provocatively aim to pass the bill in summer sessions of the parliament, in their attempt to prevent people's reaction.

Against this bill which condemns us to remain prisoners for life without rights or hope, we put our bodies and souls as a shield. This is the only thing we have left.

We start a mass hunger strike in all prisons across Greece. We claim our rights, and we fight to remain humans, instead of human shadows locked up and forgotten into despair.

We demand:

1) The withdrawal of the fascist bill for type C prisons. We say no to the Greek Guantanamo, a prison within a prison, without furloughs, without visitations, without tomorrow...

2) Furlough and parole should be an undeniable right of all prisoners. Greece is the only country where the inmate undergoes trial and punishment every single day. While the law dictates that anyone who has served 1/5 and 3/5 of his/her sentence can be granted days of leave from prison and provisional release, respectively, prisoners are obliged to pass again and again from the holy inquisition of prison prosecutors, who deny the requests one after the other without any grounds or pending disciplinary action. This is how they create desperate prisoners and reproduce criminality.

3) To apply equity before the law for all. All prisoners sentenced to life in prison for drugs according to the old law (3459/2006) (because the police made sure they are portrayed as alleged drug lords, instead of addicted users) should have the right to get a retrial in accordance with the new law and its beneficiary provisions for drug users (4139/2013).

4) To apply the right of conjugal visits. In prison they deprive you of your freedom. But in Greek prisons they deprive you even of the smile of human communication and direct contact with your loved ones. Conjugal visits are permitted in prisons of all European countries; an inmate is being deprived of human communication only in Greece.

5) To end, now, the continuous captivity of those facing deportation. Hundreds of imprisoned migrants remain locked up due to bureaucracy of embassies, even though they have served their full sentence. We demand the immediate release of these prisoners.

We demand that the ministry of Justice deal with the real problems in prisons and immediately withdraw the fascist bill for the Greek Guantanamo of Domokos prison.

The minister of Justice is to be held responsible for every day of hunger strike and every prisoner whose life is in danger.

**WE THE PRISONERS ON HUNGER STRIKE WILL WIN.
STRUGGLE – DIGNITY – SOLIDARITY**

Prison Struggle Committee

Hunger Strikes in Corporate Immigrant Prisons in the United States

March 2014

<http://libcom.org/blog/hunger-strikes-corporate-immigrant-prisons-united-states-10032014>

Here is an expected result of the cruelty that is immigrant detention. Hundreds out of 1,300 immigrants currently being detained in the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma began protesting on Friday. They began a hunger strike against deportations as well as better conditions in the facility such as higher wages, better food and better treatment.

On the evening of Friday, the number of those on strike reached 750 according to the ICE (U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement), but some other organizations not affiliated with the U.S. government claimed that 1,200 prisoners were protesting in reality. The number eventually dropped to 330 on Sunday, however protests inside and outside of the detention center are continuing.

These demonstrations are a result of a horrifying situation in this facility that is very similar to other detention centers in the United States. In this specific center, prisoners are paid 1 USD per day, almost all of which goes to extremely high costs of goods at the commissary (prisons' equivalent to a convenience store), and hardly receive any medical treatment. Meanwhile, the for-profit organization that runs the facility, GEO Group, had a net income of 134 million USD in 2012 alone.

The ICE deported nearly 370 thousand immigrants from the United States in the year 2013. While the Immigration & Customs Enforcement eagerly points out that approximately sixty percent of these have criminal records, the other forty percent presumably do not, and the majority of those who do have criminal records have minor charges. In addition, more than one hundred thousand of those deported in 2013 were done so under speedy circumstances without any form of trial or legal advocacy. Throughout the Obama administration, up to two million people were deported from the United States.

With these facts in mind, it is easy to see why prisoners are striking against deportations, better prison conditions and better pay within this facility. If those striking reach the 72nd hour of their demonstration, they will undergo a medical evaluation according to the ICE, which will probably be the first time that they receive a comprehensive medical checkup during their time in the detention facility. Unfortunately, government agencies are trying to ensure that this story falls on deaf ears; the ICE made a recent statement that some of the prisoners have records for violent crimes.

Although this may sound like a good justification to some, some of the prisoners being rapists and murderers doesn't change the fact that the United States government and private corporations have together damaged the livelihoods of millions of people for the sake of monetary profit. Perhaps this is capitalism and the state at their worst: millions imprisoned for their right as humans to travel, and then turned over to for-profit organizations whose sole interest is maximizing income.

Immigrants in Three Prisons Begin Coordinated 'Detention Review' Boycott June 2014

<http://endimmigrationdetention.com/2014/06/02/detentionreviewboycott/>

June 2, 2014: Over 100 immigrants started a historical month-long boycott of their detention reviews this morning, insisting the process is biased, unfair and stacked against them. The boycott was coordinated between detainees caged in three separate maximum security prisons across Ontario – the Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay, Central North Correctional Centre in Penetanguishene and Toronto's Metro West Detention Centre.

Detention Reviews (DR) are the primary means through which border authorities insist that the entire immigration system is fair. They are a unique bail-like process that takes places 48 hours, 7 days, and then every 30 days after arrest. Detainees plead their case in front of an appointed 'member' who single-handedly decides on their release or terms and conditions. By refusing to participate, detainees are courageously insisting that the very fabric of the immigration detention system is unjust.

"Every time I go there it's like they have already made up their minds before we even start the session. It doesn't matter what I say, I am there only for a few minutes before they state that I am flight risk and to come back in 30 days. I've been in front of them 12 times and nothing is changing and I am tired of it." — A.K., jailed at Central East Correctional Centre in Lindsay.

"They pretend like I just came from the airport yesterday but I've been in this country for 23 years and that's not right to treat someone like that. I don't have a country to go back to, and I grew up here and they're holding me because I don't have any money to get out." — S.M., jailed at Central East Correctional Centre.

This action is part of the ongoing #MigrantStrike that started in September 2013, when 191 detainees began a non-cooperation protest. They went on hunger strike, 2 of them for over 60 days, boycotted their detention reviews, and refused to enter their cells. In retaliation, immigration enforcement has deported some key strike organizers, released a few, moved others into prisons across Ontario, and locked up hunger strikers in segregation. Yet, strike actions are continuing.



Incarcerated Workers Launch Nonviolent Work Strike Against "New Jim Crow" Across Alabama Prisons April 2014

Peaceful Protest Demands Wages for Labor, End to Overcrowding and Inhumane Conditions, Transformation of American Justice System

BIRMINGHAM, AL— Hidden from public view by barbed-wire fences and windowless concrete walls, a movement is brewing in Alabama that could change America. This Monday, hundreds of men incarcerated in St. Clair and prisons across the state will stop work, adding economic muscle to their demands for wages for their labor, an end to overcrowding and inhumane conditions, an end to the "New Jim Crow" of mass incarceration of African-Americans, and the repurposing the prison system as a tool for genuine rehabilitation in a wounded world. The demands of the peaceful strike action are outlined in detail in the Education, Rehabilitation, and Re-Entry Preparedness Bill (FREEDOM Bill), which was presented to the state legislature by the Free Alabama Movement in January.

Melvin Ray, spokesperson for the Free Alabama Movement (FAM) said, “When we look at our situations inside of the Alabama Department of Corrections, we have no choice but to engage in this nonviolent and peaceful protest for civil and human rights. We sleep with rats and roaches. We work for free and eat slop unfit for human consumption. We serve decades in prison solely to provide free labor and without any real prospect for parole, and without any recourse to the courts for justice or redress of grievances. Our mothers, wives, and daughters must expose their breasts and panties just to visit us. This should not be acceptable to anyone. Prison is supposed to be a place where people go to work out issues and return to society. But when there is no focus on education or rehab but solely on profit margins, human suffering is inevitable. ADOC is about free labor and the new slavery no one wants to talk about. That is no longer going to work for the 30,000 of us who suffer because of it.”

The Alabama prison system is notoriously overcrowded. Built with a capacity of 16,000, the state’s penitentiaries currently imprison over 30,000 individuals, with catastrophic results for health and well-being of the incarcerated. Over 10,000 of the 30,000 men and women imprisoned by the Alabama Department of Corrections are forced into unpaid labor, in other words, slavery.

Unpaid labor includes cooking and cleaning, production of license plates, furniture, chemicals, and linens, and farming. At minimum wage, the total value of this slave labor is calculated at \$600,000 per day, or \$219 million per year. The slavery analogy is more than metaphorical: African-Americans comprise only 26% of Alabama’s population, but make up more than 60% of the prison population due to reactionary legislation and racist targeting of communities of color. Reports of beatings and systemic rape and sexual abuse of women inmates by guards at Tutwiler State Prison have surfaced in the media over the last year.

The men and women caught in the jaws of this infernal machine have begun uniting across racial and religious lines in a movement for systemic change. In January, FAM successfully organized a two-week strike involving over 3,000 men and women at four facilities. The strike was so effective that guards were forced to take over cleaning and cooking duties. On Monday, April 20th, the imprisoned workers plan to do it again, this time with the backing of a labor union.

The workers are supported by the Industrial Workers of the World, a storied labor union known for outside-the-box organizing strategies and for welcoming workers into its ranks that other unions exclude. The IWW has come to the aid of imprisoned workers before, bringing a petition for union recognition of a bargaining unit of four hundred incarcerated workers to the State of Ohio in 1987.

“A worker is a worker, whether in prison or not, and a group of workers is a union, whether recognized by the state or not. Incarcerated workers are some of the most exploited in the United States. We are doing everything we can do to support them, and call on all people of conscience in this country to join this movement to end

the New Jim Crow and abolish the prison industrial complex,” says Jim Faulkner, a member of the IWW’s Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee.

Repression of the Free Alabama Movement has already begun. Holman prison warden Walter Meyers has told imprisoned workers that they can bring knives to work with them, and that if they stab anyone trying to stop them from working, he will make sure they won’t get locked up for long. Prison administrators at Holman and Bibbs prisons have sought to sow division and stir up prejudices by spreading an untrue rumor that the strike is being organized by Muslims, a calculated ploy to turn Christians in the prison against the movement. They are also attempting to bribe the workers out of striking with a free barbecue provided by a local religious leader.

So far, the incarcerated workers have maintained their unity and solidarity. In the days, weeks, and months ahead, they will need all the support they can get.

Update as of April 26:

Melvin Ray was taken out of his cell and placed in solitary, without clothing or a bed, in retaliation for struggling for the freedom of the thousands of incarcerated people in Alabama and the 3 million people behind bars in the United States today. When the oppressed begin to understand their power, begin to speak out and act together, not as victims, but as a majority creating a new world that is theirs in the shell of the old--this is when the powers that be react with violence.

Bellefonte, PA

January 2014

Greetings,

My name is Jonathan Lee Riches. I have an interesting storyline to share. Hopefully my message inspires others.

I would like to talk about lawsuits and hunger striking. First, hunger striking. I was once housed at the Federal Bureau of Prison maximum security Adx in Florence, Colorado. I was placed there under Administrative detention due to filing grievances and lawsuits within the system where the BOP retaliated against me by placing me in Maximum Security to silence me. Upon arrival to Adx I immediately went on a hunger strike. At first I was not taken seriously (most inmates hunger strike for three days then quit). BOP policy is after 72 then medical staff begins to monitor, taking you out of your cell to weigh you and blood test you daily. At first I allowed them to do this. For 21 days I did not eat. Then I refused blood testing/weight ins. The BOP had no choice but to force feed me. BOP policy on force feeding: it’s video-taped, your cell extracted, the captain, psychs, and medical staff are present. You’re strapped in a chair, N.G. tube through your nose, then left in a chair upright for two hours, and then sent back to your cell. This causes the staff a lot of manpower and headaches, and each force feeding takes hours, including paperwork for them. I

stood my ground. BOP policy after 30 days of non-eating you have to be sent to a Federal Medical Center for treatment. They sent me to FMC Lexington, placed me in the SHU there, and continued on daily force feedings. Eventually, the warden and captain negotiated with me to let me out of the SHU and into general population at FMC Lexington if I ate. I agreed to this and spent my remaining Fed time in a cushy medical center. I got released from Federal prison April 2012 and posted my hunger strike documents online. Google "Jonathan Lee Riches Hunger Strike."

Second, I am in the Guinness Book of World Records for filing the most lawsuits. I filed over 5000 federal lawsuits in a five year span while in federal prison. I call it "Judicial Anarchy." I sued anything and everyone: celebrities, athletes, political figures, not expecting to win, only to clog the system up. Each pro-se lawsuit takes up to six hours of manpower to administer, docket, rule on it, and dismiss it. I became a danger to the machine of justice. The United States of America filed a civil permanent injunction against me preventing me from filing any civil suit and habeas corpus in any court in America, and giving the BOP authorization to open up all my sealed legal mail and, if going to the courts, to throw it away. A total violation of my constitutional right to access the courts. See: U.S. v. Riches case # 5:10-CV-322-KSFE.D. Kentucky.

The same Federal District judges that hear inmates' civil suits are the same judges that sentence new people and fill the prisons. By flooding the courts with lawsuits, this delays new people from sentencing. Clog the courts! I once sued George W. Bush and listed 57 pages of 1750 defendants, along with Mr. Bush and it took the clerk of court six hours to docket each defendant. Create templates of massive amounts of defendants and send lawsuits all around the country in different peoples' names. There is so much more to say in reference to this. Feel free to write me with questions. I am currently illegally incarcerated in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections on a 2 1/2 -5 year sentence under the charge 5703- wiretapping, believing I am the only person incarcerated in the United States for recording a telephone conversation. This is in retaliation for who I am. If you Google me, you will see my credentials. Keep fighting, comrades.

Jonathan Lee Riches
KX9662
SCI Benner
301 Institution Dr.
Bellefonte, PA 16823



Pikeville, TN

May 2014

On 5-26-14 Memorial day, at approximately 2:30pm, C.O. McBride came around in a segregated housing unit and informed everybody that due to the fact that it was a national holiday, Captain Higdon said there were to be no showers. Keep in mind that we are only allotted three showers per week, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Memorial Day fell on a Monday. What that means is, if we were denied a shower we would not get one until the following Wednesday. That would consist of five days without a shower. There was an immediate uprising. We kicked doors, screamed, raised hell, even one guy started yelling "If you want to treat us like animals, we'll act like animals." This went on for two hours. McBride then came around and told everyone "You're going to get your showers since you want to cry about it."

Now, I say to you, TDOC inmates, if one pod, with approximately 65 inmates can accomplish just getting shower time, think what we could accomplish if the entire population stood up and had a "sit down." I think we could get the menu changed, we might even get our cigarettes back. Remember, start threatening their security and somebody will have to take notice.

On another note, I filed a 42 U.S.C. 1983 civil litigation suit against Warden Eric Qualls, Assistant Warden Darren Settles, and Chaplain Gregory Williams for the following reason:

On 1-15-14 I requested, in writing, to be allowed to participate in the Beltane feast to be held on May 1st, 2014. I was told the matter was under review. On 4-5-14, Chaplain Gregory Williams said the Warden has approved the Wiccan Feast and it is scheduled to be held on 5-7-14. On 5-7-14 Chaplain Williams had C.O. Karen Krogman inform me that the matter was again under review. (Keep in mind that these feasts have already been approved by TDOC.) And the retaliation has already begun, with the help of the following BCCX employees:

C.O. McBride, C.O.B. Crittenden, CPI Hale, CCO Hoy King, Sgt. Apol Hubbard, Dr. Turpstra- employed by Corizon.

Dr. Turpstra denied and stopped all chronic care and KOP monthly's, except for Excedrin (I have bleeding ulcers). A plot, me thinketh. Sgt. April Hubbard is denying grievances, because she has no control over institutional staff and what they do (she's the grievance board Sgt.). C.O. McBride is denying me access to forms of any kind. C.O.B. Crittenden refuses to put me on the sick call roster and denies me access to forms. Every time I leave my cell, C.P.I. Hale tightens the handcuffs and shackles so tight it cuts off my circulation and my hands turn purple. And CCO Hoy King (over at the library) is denying access to the courts by ignoring all requests made.

Then you take Unit Manager James Sullivan- he's refusing to take me off of P.C.

despite my repeated requests. MCCX forced me into P.C. and now I'm being ignored on all fronts. So if there's anything anyone can do, phone calls made irately, newspapers, activists, etc., please do so. This is a nationwide request. The phone number for this prison is: 423-881-3251, the fax number is 423-881-4226.

I also plan on alerting any and all placard holders and activists to join me on a march on TDOC in Nashville, TN this time next year. I flatten my sentence in January/February of 2015 and as soon as I'm able, I plan on doing this, hosting a rally statewide.

To other political prisoners: keep up the struggle. When we win, we win big. Every win is a big win!

In solidarity,
Karma Grace #207722
1045 Horsehead Rd.
Pikeville, TN 37367

Menard Hunger Strikers Endure Beating, Threats by Nurses but Vow, 'We Will Not Let Them Break Us' January 2014

The following information is drawn from letters received from prisoners in Administrative Detention at Menard Correctional Center in Menard, Illinois, and compiled on Jan. 25 by Attorney Alice Lynd.

"I, along with approximately 20 other captives, filed our individual grievances and declared a hunger strike this 15th day of January 2014. The number may be higher," writes one of the hunger strikers.

"As you know, today we declared a hunger strike – a peaceful hunger strike – due to the conditions of confinement we are being subjected to." "There are only about 25 to 28 inmates on the high security unit and most of us are on hunger strike. The rest are too fearful to do it because we've been told they'll never let us out of Administrative Detention if we complain too much." "We are all staying on hunger strike until something is done about our conditions."

Staff response on Jan. 15, when the hunger strike began:

"Upon us declaring a hunger strike, the staff members came to us and told us they were going to strip us off of our clothes and all of our property, to which we responded and told them they are only supposed to take our food and toothpaste. We were told that they 'do what they want to do with us.'" "Prison staff came on location like storm troopers at approximately 10 a.m. Their tactic was intimidation. Their first order was to cuff up, stating that they were taking all of our property out the cell – including legal documents. So there was a standoff, because they are only allowed to remove food items during hunger strikes." "We are all staying on hunger strike until something is done about our conditions."

The beating of Armando Velasquez:

"During the standoff, two prisoners cuffed up and were escorted to see the med. tech. while officers stripped their cells out – TVs, everything. One of the two prisoners who came out [of] their cells [was] Armando Velasquez. Cells at Menard, designed for one but often housing two men, are less than five feet wide, with most of that width being take up by the bunks." "He complied, came out of his cell, was taken to a blind spot where there are no cameras and beaten up." "Velasquez related to us and the lieutenant on the wing that while escorting him back up the stairs ... officers slammed him down on the stairs and began kicking him. I and several others witnessed Velasquez upon coming upon the wing be slammed face first into the plexi-glass – should be on camera." "Upon bringing him back to his cell, they slammed him face first into the door and yanked his arms up behind his head. ... Then they threw him in his cell, stripped out of all property and removed the cuffs. Everyone on the wing began hollering and banging because ... Armando was in desperate need of medical attention." "There are cameras on the wing that seen what happened on the way back to his cell." "When one of the inmates was being returned, I could hear him screaming just off our wing next to the stairs. I then watched [officers] dragging an inmate, Armando Velasquez, back to his cell. His hands were cuffed behind his back and he was thrown into his cell face first. The officers then stated, 'Who's next?'" "We could hear him screaming to stop hitting him. Before putting this inmate back in the cell, he was again assaulted and thrown in the cell. The staff members were laughing and said to us out loud, 'Who's next?' We all then refused to come out of our cells in fear of being assaulted." "I then told them there was no reason to do that to us. One of the staff members then said to me, 'This is what happens to people that go on hunger strikes.' 'Are you ready to end your hunger strike now?' I told him no and to do what they're going to do. We all then refused to come out again." "Finally a major came back up and told me ... they're only supposed to shake us down to make sure there is no food in our cells. I explained what just happened to Armando, and he acted surprised. He called medical staff to come give Armando medical care and promised ... that the staff who did it would be dealt with." "A lieutenant officer then came up here to see what was going on and we told him his staff had assaulted one of us. He then walked to this inmate's cell and saw that he was injured and had staff take him out of his cell and said they were taking him to health care. This was in the morning and it is now 10:00 p.m. and he has not come back." "After placing

Velasquez back into the cage he informed the lieutenant and sergeant that he was assaulted and that his shoulder or arm was out of socket.” “The sergeant had officers escort Mr. Velasquez to the health care unit. He has yet to return. All his property was packed up and we were told he was being kept in the health care unit. We do not know the full extent of his injury.” “After moving Velasquez to health care ... a lieutenant assumed control and explained to us that only our food items would be removed from our cells. We stood down and were escorted to see the med. tech. per protocol.” “They put all movement on hold and then came back and gave all their property back to the guys who they took from who were on hunger strike.”

Medical:

“We all now fear for him because Menard is known for beating inmates up and taking them to the health care unit and beating them up some more due to this unit having blind spots.” “There are no cameras in the Health Care unit. ... I was assaulted there myself.” “The staff and nurses are telling us that once we are in the hospital they will make our lives miserable and maybe someone will die. The nurses threaten our lives every time they come by our cells.” “They are already threatening to force feed us and not be kind when they do it.” “The nurses that are supposed to check on us while on hunger strike are telling us, ‘You guys could die on this and it won’t help you.’” “We are being told we will be force fed and that they don’t need or care about any court orders.” “They will have boxes ready for us for when we die.” “One nurse told one inmate, and excuse my language but these are her own words, ‘I can’t wait till you come to health care messed up; and when you shit on yourself, I’m going to let it dry and then when I have to clean it off you I’ll scrub the skin off your balls.’ She then told me and others that since we are making them work with this hunger strike, they have boxes waiting for us in health care.”

Concluding messages from prisoners:

“I am now going on my sixth day on hunger strike in Menard C.C. and wanted to let you know that me along with at least 15 inmates in the high security unit are planning on going as long as we can or until our issues are fixed.” “Regardless of what they say, we will not let them break us. We will go all the way. They also mentioned that this hunger strike was in the media. I believe this is stopping them from beating all of us up. I thank you and I am grateful for your support.” “Please call and inquire specifically about the welfare of Armando Velasquez, M20649.” “Please call out here to inquire about his wellbeing.” “Please let it be known what happened today. Maybe your phone calls prevented more serious injuries or even saved lives. If we have any supporters, please urge them to contact us and stand with us.” “I would like you to call this institution and speak directly to the warden on this inmate’s behalf as well as the rest of the inmates in Administrative Detention.” “I would really appreciate it if you can call down here when you receive this letter to see if he’s alright and also put the word out about what occurred today. We will continue to stay on hunger strike and we are very, very thankful for your support.”

Ohio

April 2014

On April 6 I put Attorney Richard Kerger’s phone number on my phone list. Next attempt to call, my PIN # was suspended, locking me out of the phone system entirely. [Sean might not realize it, but the ODRC has also restricted Sean from receiving Jpay emails]. When I notified Global Tel Link, I received a response that my PIN is suspended per “operations support center, chief inspector’s office.” The chief inspector is Gary Croft. His job is to answer grievance appeals, not harass my communication. I’ve had to sue this goofball three times and while the last lawsuit was pending, he was named to the parole board to give me five years, then went back to chief inspector. Now, he has cut off my outside communication just when I got an attorney and can sue them successfully. The Chief Inspector can be reached at (614) 752-1677.

I ate my last meal, dinner April 8th. I’m not hungerstriking, as I don’t want [to be] stuck in a strip cell and fucked around. But, the world knows I’m not eating and I won’t be- I’ll be flushing my food until my communication is resumed and the call I missed this past weekend is provided to me.

The more people who contact Gestapo Gary and demand he stop fuckweaseling me, the better. Please feel free to post and re-post everywhere. My concern is that the fascists, who haven’t done such a whizbang job running the prisons now want to control what you read and hear and know. Nothing they “regulating” by stomping on well-established political speech in a public forum is related in any way to a legitimate penological interest. They want to exterminate ideas, free thought.

I don’t think they’ve thought this through... But I have... So stay tuned.

Freedom or Death,
Sean Swain



SOLIDARITY: WORKING ACROSS THE BARS

Mass. Anti-Shackling Bill Signed into Law May 2014

by Joe Mirkin

Last week, Governor Deval Patrick signed an anti-shackling bill into law, making Massachusetts the 21st state to abolish the harmful and brutal practice of restraining incarcerated women who are pregnant, in labor, or in the post partum period.

The bill, S.2063, “An Act to Prevent Shackling and Promote Safe Pregnancies for Female Inmates, also takes great strides towards establishing a “minimum level of care that must be afforded to pregnant inmates in county correctional facilities.”

While previous anti-shackling rules only applied to state prisons, the new law covers all corrections facilities in Massachusetts.

We strongly agree with Marianne Bullock, of the Prison Birth Project, when she said, “The next step is ensuring that this law is enforced.” We will continue, alongside fellow members of the Massachusetts Anti-Shackling Coalition, to advocate against any continuation of the practice following the passage of this law. Our thanks and congratulations go out to all coalition members!

Members of the Massachusetts Anti-Shackling Coalition Include:

ACLU of Massachusetts, American Friends Service Committee of Western MA, Black and Pink, Boston Area Rape Crisis Center, Boston Feminists for Liberation, Casa Myrna, Civil Liberties and Public Policy, Coalition for Effective Public Safety, Dismas House—Worcester, Families for Justice as Healing, Harvard Prison Legal Assistance Project, Health Care for All, Health Law Advocates, Hollaback! Boston, Jane Doe Inc—the MA Coalition Against Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence, Jewish Alliance on Law and Social Action, JRI Health, The Law Offices of Howard Friedman, The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Organization for Women, Mount Holyoke Students Against Mass Incarceration, NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts, National Lawyers Guild, Massachusetts Chapter, Out Now—Springfield, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, Pretrial Working Group, Prison Birth Project, Prisoners’ Assistance Project at NUSL, Prisoners’ Legal Services, Prison Policy Initiative, Real Cost of Prisons Project, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice, Stern, Shapiro, Weissberg and Garin, LLP, And Still We Rise, Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry, The Women’s Bar Association of Massachusetts, Worcester Homeless Action Committee.

Modern Prison Resistance: Figuring Out “The Man” May 2014

Two hundred and twenty five (225) years of American corrections has afforded the great oppressor, the prison industrial complex, a vast education in how to suppress free speech and quell prison insurrection and resistance. The disciplinary regulations, which are pretty much cookie-cutter consistent from state to state, are designed to make it near impossible to organize in prison or to engage in acts of civil disobedience as a method of shedding light on prison abuse and systematic failure: failure which diminishes public safety and promotes the core separations which capitalism requires. In order to “fight the machine” today, to engage in modern prison resistance, the prisoner must figure out “the man” just as “the man” has figured him/her out.

Our phone calls are monitored, our mail is read, and the limits on contact visitation make it hard to get the facts about the abuse and failure out there without the gulag officials getting a heads up. We reach out to politicians, human rights advocates, and oversight groups and many times the warden and his/her henchmen will get the mess, whatever mess we are exposing, cleaned up before it can be addressed. Our letters are tossed in the trash, our visits taken away as a punishment, and our phone “privileges” suspended for any contrived reason the warden may create. What is needed is a more powerful avenue for free expression: for free speech. What is needed is the prisoner directed advocacy group.

What we have begun here in Massachusetts is to form advocacy groups which present the real voice of the prisoner, of the oppressed. The one who is oppressed is truly the only one who has standing to complain about the systematic failures as well as to ask for what remedies we know are needed. Now those disciplinary regulations that I mentioned earlier do not allow us to form such advocacy groups in prison. In fact, they are fully designed to crush any such unity or free expression. Due to this fact our modern approach is to find the right people to form the groups outside of the prison wall, vowing to present an agenda fully developed by informal prisoner steering committees. We have already made great inroads in this modern effort. Men here in Massachusetts have found loyal advocates who have formed now what we are seeing as formidable advocacy groups that will represent what the prisoner sees as our needs. CURE-ARM, Inc. and BREAD & WATER PRISONERS, Inc. have both filed Articles of Organization papers with the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s office. Their first public event was held in September of 2013 when they held a joint protest outside of the Massachusetts Department of Corrections Headquarters. This year they participated in the “Jobs Not Jails” Rally in Boston Common and are currently planning their next protest to be held outside a Massachusetts state prison. These two groups represent the most underutilized resource in the resistance movement: the prisoner himself/herself. We are the experts on the failures.

Guard upon prisoner abuse, inadequate prison medical care, the aging prisoner population, the failed commutation and parole systems, and the high cost of producing/high recidivism rates corrections failures are at the forefront of the protest movement. These groups educate and organize, all on the instructions of prisoners. They work to tell the real story about the failed prison system here in the commonwealth as well as demand that the rehabilitation mandate here in the state be met. Prisoners in the state of Massachusetts have a legally mandated right to be rehabilitated as well as a constitutionally protected free speech right to demand it!

In order to move into the future of modern resistance we must form such prisoner directed groups nationwide. They must use all the modern electronic media and communication modes. They must draw attention through protests and other acts of civil disobedience. The public must be educated to the fact that failed corrections promotes crime. Massachusetts corrections literally takes a billion dollars a year to sustain crime and recidivism. It is unacceptable to CURE-ARM and BREAD & WATER, and should be unacceptable to you. The groups that have “claimed” to represent prisoners, state-funded and compromised groups, must be banished to the dungeon of the oppressor, while the prisoner-guided group moves to the head of the spear in the fight for human dignity, compassionate understanding, and justice tempered with mercy.

Please contact us and let us know what you think you can do to get involved in this modern resistance movement.

CURE-ARM, Inc.
c/o Mrs. Donna Barnoski
PO Box 396
Billerica, MA 01821
tmuise63@gmail.com
<http://www.facebook.com/curearminc>

BREAD & WATER PRISONERS, Inc.
c/o Ms. Karen L. Schulman
PO Box 84
Hopdale, MA 01747
KLSchulman@verizon.net

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MCI Shirley
PO Box 1218
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COMMENTARY AND CALLS TO ACTION

From Access Secure Pak's Gift Package Program to all Prison Commissaries Operated by Keefe: Boycott! Boycott! Boycott!

April 2014

This is a reminder that if we collectively struggle against the Prison Industrial Slave Complex from inside the Belly, we can win!

I put out a Call to Action during the summer of 2013 to the prisoner-class which was published in Prison Action News. This call to action, inspired by the California prisoner hunger strikers and those comrades who organized the Agreement To End All Hostilities, was meant to encourage those of us who consist of the prisoner-class to actively and aggressively organize a boycott and letter-writing campaign against Access Secure Pak's (a subsidiary of Keefe) egregious price-gouging tactics being perpetrated upon us through its quarterly “gift package” program which is designed to accomplish one goal: maximize profits by exploiting prisoners and our families.

I am putting the prisoner-class on notice that this boycott and letter-writing campaign is being expanded to include all commissaries in all prisons owned and operated by the private corporate vendor “Keefe Commissary Network Sales” which has been allowed to monopolize all prison commissaries here in the Commonwealth of Virginia and many other localities throughout this Imperialist Empire.

Keefe is a virus which, if left unchecked, will slowly spread while feasting on the prisoner-class and our families. Its belly is bloated with the funds they secure through blatant price-gouging tactics; funds that we voluntarily give them that we've earned from our slave-wage jobs; and funds they gain from our families- many of whom are working-class and poor families that barely survive on minimum wages.

If the prisoner-class at large feels no motivation to struggle against private corporate interests operating inside these prisons, consider this: private corporations like Keefe, Global Tel Link (GTL) and Corizon invest a portion of the money they gain from us to hire lobbyists and make political campaign contributions to politicians' political action committees (PAC). These “hired” politicians (at the urging of the lobbyists working for the corporations) then introduce legislation to congress, which, if passed (and many of them are), will result in much longer prison terms and an increase in the overall prison population. The longer prisoners stay in bondage, the more money these monopoly corporations like Keefe, GTL, and Corizon stand to gain.

Thus, the more money we of the prisoner-class spend with Keefe, the more we unwittingly pay and invest in our own incarceration. We need to research the laws of our respective states to learn how we collectively can lodge Federal Anti-Trust and Consumer Protection complaints against Keefe. Is Keefe price-gouging the hell out of us? Is the quality of products Keefe sells of poor or defective quality? Then we must organize across racial, organizational, political, and gender/sexual lines to oppose and boycott Keefe. Buy only essential items from Keefe's commissary such as hygiene and stationary. Don't order a "gift package." Organize letter-writing campaigns against Keefe, located at PO Box 17490, St. Louis, MO 63178 and put them on notice that we are boycotting their price-gouging tactics and that the boycott will be ongoing until they dramatically lower their prices and start selling products that are of "like grade and quality" as products sold out in the general public. File complaints against Keefe with the Better Business Bureau at 1 Metropolitan Square, St. Louis, MO 63102 and with the Consumer Protection Division at PO Box 899, Jefferson City, MO 65102. Together we can WIN! ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE AND TO THE PRISONER-CLASS!

Brian L. Rowe #1131545
Buckingham Correctional Center
PO Box 430
Dillwyn, VA 23936

F.T.S. - United Front June 2014

The biggest and most crucial hindrance in establishing any prison movement is the lack of unity and solidarity among our own ranks. We are essentially a broken and divided people. We are so busy fighting among ourselves we forget who the real enemy is. A United Front does not require that we must hold hands and sing, but it does require that we become less one-dimensional so that we can see past race, orientation, affiliation, or nature of crime.

How do we bridge this division? We must show our fellow prisoners that we are all in the trenches together; that there is in fact a growing nation-wide movement, and that things can and will change. I encourage you to start a F.T.S. Chapter and put together a steering committee to actively put campaigns and projects together to help create an environment that fosters empowerment and solidarity. The Chapter can encourage 'nation/community' leaders to stand firm in their duty to try to resolve the differences they have with opposition groups. This can involve dialogue to quash old rivalries or to call for a cease-fire.

The next step would be to 'solidify the solidarity.' This is to strengthen the ties between each other. Organize a "multi-association" work-out session or sporting

event. Mix it up a bit. Get creative. Have fun. On the 9th of September every year there is a Nation-wide "Day of Peace and Solidarity" in remembrance of the Attica Prison Uprising of 1971. This could be a great day to initiate dialogue or sporting events. Organize a large "Solidarity Spread" and invite prisoners to eat with you whom you would not normally associate (no strings attached). Make the effort to see the true person behind the image you have created of them. Get to know them as one day you may be in the trenches together. Foster camaraderie and friendship. Slowly, but surely we will build a United Front strong enough to resist the oppression of the entire system. Make it happen!

United in Struggle – United we Fight The System.

~The Rue~

Chowchilla, CA June 2014

I am writing this request to anyone that can assist or help us in the following area:
We have no type of art-hobby program. That is a right for full privilege state prisoners. The current Warden Ron Davis makes several false promises about this hobby program that is a total farce. This prison has a room set aside for an art-hobby-shop room, but they fail to set up a program.

Feel free to contact me at my address.

Kenny Calihan F17158
PO Box 92
Chowchilla CA 93610

Portage, WI June 2014

Oh what hell I have been through from the last time. First, sorry if anyone has not received a response from a letter. Some of my mail gets sent back, others did not go out.

After they stopped my mental health treatment (as they just did again) in October 2013, I kicked off protest after protest and was able to get others to join in in max seg where I was until May 7. They have taken everything they can because there are not a lot of inmates as myself that will fight back. You got life and still care about the time. I got over five more years because of my protests and only started out with 12. Do not take injustice.

I'm happy to write it has taken the DOC over three months to answer my last request for the DOC to stop giving vegans milk and to replace the milk with vegan milk or vegan food. I put the DOC in a really bad place because if they do not, they are legal toast and open the door for me to raise hell. If they do, they have to say I win again and change DOC policy and the vegan food menu.

I believe they are trying to find a way to do it just for me but even that is going to help us vegans in court, as they cannot do for one and not for all. So I win even if I have to go about this the legal way.

For the ones in DS1 seg, thank you for taking part in the Obs protest. In ways it helps, in ways it does not. But fighting back anyway you know how is good. The very few that do have mental health problems as myself I hope you get the treatment we need and the DOC stops playing games. They give their informants everything and make us suffer. It should be the other way around. My protest has only just begun. The lies that are told and put in my medical records will not stop me.

Please know the courts ruled in Wisconsin that DOC staff that are not HSU nurses cannot hand out meds, but DOC still allows men to receive our meds from non-HSU staff. Our fight is a long one but put in all the ICE's and complaints you can. Slowly it's working and staff told me they are looking into ways to change the policies around this. Do not give up. Keep pushing the problem in every prison not just in WI. If staff are not RN's they have no reason or right to hand out our meds. That is how people get sick and die, from getting the wrong meds. We have a right to be safe. So fight back with me. No more quick fix to save money and put a life at risk.

Thank you for your time. My room is up for now. My words end but not my fight. We are one and as one we fight together. Stop the lies and fighting each other. Stand to fight another day and not give up. One broken is too many.

Educate yourself all you can! Use your time to not fight back each other.

Animal rights activist,

Manuel C. Salas 504212
CCI
PO Box 900
Portage WI 53901-0900

Wisconsin Prisoners Unite April 2014

How much more are we going to let the Wisconsin Dept of Corrections take away from us to fill their coffers while preying upon our friends, our families, and ourselves while ignoring their very own rules. "Wis. Admin Code DOC Canteen (1)(d) Institutions SHALL permit inmates to purchase approved property not carried in the canteen...The procedures SHALL permit purchases from a sufficient number of enterprises to ensure a reasonable selection and a competitive price."

In the last three years the DOC has ignored this administrative rule to prey, monetarily, on anyone ordering our personal property or canteen. This has been done by:

- A. First, limiting our suppliers to four and now two: J.L. Marcus and Union Supply, whose prices are eerily similar;
- B. Eliminating our institutional canteen to go to Keefe Canteen Services;
- C. Allowing the three above to collude to charge prices 10-30% above regular catalog prices including \$.67 for an embossed envelope.

These changes were made because the DOC is receiving kickbacks from these companies to operate in Wisconsin and we have no choice but to buy from them because no others are acceptable, including the US Postal Service.

Further, to ensure our financial support of the DOC, they have invented volume limits of two boxes 18"x18"x18" for personal property, not electronics, and one box 14"x14"x14" for hobbies. How does this support the DOC? Easy. If one has the property allowed and orders canteen, two boxes are not big enough. Then, on a random cell search, if an officer decides you have the property above the volume limits, it can be confiscated as contraband, even if consumable.

Now with Columbia Correctional Institution in the lead, they are planning the same back door attack on our hobby programs so they can once again profit. Plans are in the making and close to finalization to limit what suppliers from which we can order our hobby products.

I, personally, have a problem with this for a number of reasons, including:

1. It eliminates my choice of who and where I want to spend my money;
2. My supplier is a small business who will now probably lose many customers because of the greed of the DOC;
3. This policy takes advantage of the poor by charging 10-30% more because of the DOC's need to line its pockets.

It's time we fight back. Write letters, get your families to write, call or send emails to the Wis. Dept of Corrections, PO Box 7925, Madison WI, 53707-7925- Phone (608) 420-5058. As prisoners we cannot do it alone because we are prisoners and not worth their time. As long as we continue to fight each other, the DOC will continue to take things away. Get involved!